

Forum

Toward a United States Arctic Research Policy

Status of Arctic Research Coordination

Of all countries bordering on the Arctic, the United States is the only one without a national institute, laboratory, or any other organization devoted to the sustained planning and support of Arctic research. Up to now, the responsibility for planning, implementing, and funding Arctic research has been divided between several federal agencies, the state of Alaska, and private groups whose mandates or objectives are often unconnected.

The result of this pluralistic approach to U.S. science in the Arctic is that basic research has been conducted in piecemeal fashion. Individual studies are proposed and supported separately, and their costly logistic requirements must be funded in competition with research carried out under less-demanding environmental conditions in the rest of the country. Fundamental data-gathering and interpretation of information has been the responsibility of public agencies whose missions are separate and whose budgets may not reflect the priorities of Arctic issues.

Applied research has often been proprietary; as industrial research became dominant in volume and continuity, much scientific information and understanding of Arctic processes moved out of the public domain. Development often preceded the acquisition of necessary scientific knowledge; indeed, scientific research in the Arctic has frequently been supported as a corrective measure only after the need for such knowledge was made apparent by serious mistakes or problems.

A boom-bust development characterized much U.S. Arctic research, as scientific thrusts, often short-term and unrelated, followed one another. Because of the lack of continuity in science support, teams that achieved scientific advances disintegrated after completion of their missions, often without complete documentation of their work. At later dates, whole new groups had to be formed to resume studies on the same subject. Long-term research has been losing progressively to short-term crash studies.

This state of affairs is in sharp contrast with Arctic research and Arctic science policies of most other circumpolar nations. The Soviet Union, for instance, has clearly defined goals toward which their Arctic policy and related research thrusts are oriented; an estimated 20-25 thousand scientists work on Arctic research there; no less than 170 scientific institutes are involved in research linked to offshore oil and gas exploration and exploitation alone; 37 Arctic research vessels and 19 icebreakers are available; and vast numbers of institutes and specialized technical and vocational schools develop human expertise in a concerted effort to achieve the Soviet Arctic policy goals.

In the past there have been several high-level attempts to coordinate U.S. Arctic research programs. For instance, the Interagency Arctic Research Coordinating Committee (IARCC) was established in 1967 and given a number of specific tasks. A few years later the expectation of an accelerated pace of activities in the U.S. Arctic led to several U.S. policy decisions. In particular, National Security Decision Memorandum (NSDM) 144 of December 21, 1971, established as national policy "... that the U.S. will support the sound and rational development of the Arctic, guided by the principle of minimizing any adverse effects to the environment; will promote mutually beneficial international cooperation in the Arctic; and will, at the same time, provide for the protection of essential security interests in the Arctic. ..."

Unfortunately, mechanisms for funding and for the adequate implementation of these policy decisions were not developed concomitantly. In 1978 the President's science adviser informed the pertinent agencies of the formal dissolution of IARCC. A recent study conducted by the Department of Interior, Defense, and Energy (1982) came to the conclusion that "... the intentions of NSDM 144 have never been implemented and the U.S. lacks an explicit Arctic research policy."

Difficulties in the Establishment of a National Arctic Research Policy

Several factors contributed to the difficulties in establishing a U.S. national research policy for the Arctic:

Alaskan, national, and international interests. Alaska is the only U.S. state in Arctic and subarctic territory. An Arctic research policy is thus viewed by many as a research policy for Alaska, a "boonanza" for Alaskan scientists. At the federal level,

many of the scientific and technological problems are perceived as being of predominantly Alaskan interest, consequently, they are expected to be funded mostly from Alaskan sources. In turn the Alaska state government is reluctant to support specific Arctic research programs whose intended beneficiaries are spread over the entire nation. To counter these arguments, one must point out that the resource development in the United States Arctic and subarctic regions and adjacent waters and the deployment of defense systems at high latitude have become, and will remain, a vital part of our entire nation's economy, trade, and security. And one must point out that U.S. interests in the Arctic extend far beyond the boundaries of U.S. territory, waters, and air space. The United States has vital defense interests in the entire Arctic Ocean, Northern Canada, Greenland, and Svalbard and vital interests in the international economic and cultural policy issues common to all circumpolar nations and their native people.

The definition of 'Arctic.' Another complicating factor is the very definition of the concept 'Arctic' in the context of a U.S. Arctic policy. The Arctic is normally thought of as a geographical region, one that can be defined by geographic coordinates. In the context of human activity, technology, and science, however, the concept of 'Arctic' is much broader and should be defined in an operational way. Indeed, when we talk of 'Arctic policy,' we think of it as applied to, or related to, those high northern latitude regions in which cold climate, long winter nights, sea ice, permafrost, ice fog, scarcity of fast surface transportation routes, and geomagnetic and auroral perturbations are all factors that, individually or in concert, impair the transportation of 'conventional' lifestyles and technologies from lower latitudes.

Facts, figures, and for instance. A third factor complicating the establishment of a national Arctic research policy is related to the difficulty of estimating the (substantial) cost of not having one. Frequently, politicians, the lay public, and scientists unfamiliar with Arctic research, ask for 'facts and figures' about the uncoordinated, piecemeal, boom-bust Arctic research endeavors and the related waste of financial and intellectual resources. This is most difficult to provide, mainly because the really significant examples are not easy-to-appraise blockbuster 'blunders,' but, rather, the myriad of incidents which, taken together, present a macroscopic configuration whose impact is painfully evident to those who actually perform Arctic research but quite laborious to describe to others. A good account of examples of individual incidents is given in Hickok *et al.* (1981).

The multiplicity and interdisciplinary nature of scientific goals. The sheer number of Arctic research problems that await solution is staggering. In the geosciences alone we may cite as examples of broad Arctic research goals: (1) acquisition of an adequate data base of key geophysical parameters needed in long-term environmental forecasting; (2) study of global atmospheric circulation in the Arctic, circumpolar distribution of industrial pollutants, and related potential climate impact; (3) study of sea-ice mechanics; (4) sea-ice forecasting; (5) study of pollutant dispersion in ice-bearing soils and ice-infested waters; (6) prediction of polar upper-atmosphere disturbances and effects on northern communications and defense systems; (7) permafrost dynamics, detection, and mitigation of effects on structures; (8) ice-fog dynamics and potential mitigation. To this one must add less site-specific topics but ones of great site-specific importance, such as the geology and tectonics of the Aleutian Chain, the Alaskan North Slope, the Arctic Ocean Basin, etc. Similarly, extensive lists can be drawn for all other major scientific disciplines. Quite generally, Arctic science is eminently interdisciplinary in nature—Arctic phenomena and processes cannot be studied in isolation, Arctic studies are very expensive, and the need for coordination is dictated more by logistic considerations than by strictly scientific arguments.

The military-industrial complication. Finally, another complicating factor for Arctic research policy arises from the restricted dissemination of information on research carried out by two crucial 'users' of the Arctic: private industry and the military. The private sector has been reluctant to invest large sums in developing local technologies and solving local problems and, then, sharing the results with other competing enterprises in the north. This picture is compounded by an understandable suspicion on the part of industry that national coordination or national policy setting could lead to greater control and regulation. Yet, by and large, industry would be a prime beneficiary of an expanded and more reliable public data base on the Arctic environment and Arctic processes and of better and faster conduits to

greatly expanded sources of scientific information. On the military side, the Department of Defense is reluctant to tie its Arctic research needs to a public Arctic science policy. Such a policy, among other things, would address not only the Department of Defense research, but it would help create a research environment conducive to providing the Department of Defense with crucial information, environmental data, basic research results, and above all, the expert manpower needed to answer myriad relevant technical questions.

Elements of a National Arctic Research Policy

One of the most difficult tasks in developing a national Arctic research policy is to provide for a fair balance between inherently antagonistic interests, such as the thrust for profit-guided development and decreased governmental regulation of industry, the concerns for adequate and long-term environmental and cultural protection of the native people, the concerns for national defense and related protection of information of the military, and the concern for objective, unbiased, and open research of the academic community.

A national policy for Arctic research should take into account the following important factors, which will bear on, or determine, national decisions concerning the Arctic:

1. The natural resource potential of the Arctic during a time of intense global competition for resources. It is estimated that as much as 50% of the total undiscovered oil resources remaining within the jurisdiction of the United States occur in the Arctic (National Petroleum Council, 1981). The U.S. Arctic also contains immense reserves of coal as well as strategic minerals and an extremely valuable marine fishery.

2. The susceptibility of the Arctic environment to man-caused change. Many aspects of the Arctic land, freshwater, and marine ecosystems are vulnerable to environmental changes; recovery rates are slow, and some effects can be expected to be long-term. Many of the observations and studies that would assist long-term planning and the minimization of undesirable effects of human activities in the Arctic are not yet available.

3. The effects of technological and developmental changes on the lifestyles, values, and culture of the native population of the Alaskan Arctic. Alaska is clearly in a difficult period of transition. Although native groups realize that more changes are inevitable, they wish to thoroughly understand the many ramifications of proposed developmental decisions so that they can achieve a balance of economic and cultural well-being.

4. The strategic location of the Arctic. A thorough understanding of the Arctic environment is essential to an effective North American defense posture. Of particular importance are all aspects related to frozen ground, Arctic climate, sea ice and the Arctic Ocean, and the upper atmosphere and ionosphere at high geomagnetic latitudes.

5. The need and opportunities for international cooperation and exchange of information. Much Arctic research involves the ocean, the atmosphere, and the biological populations—entities that do not conform to national boundaries. Thus it is important to have effective exchange of technical information between Arctic nations and to expand the circle of cooperating nations. Yet the Arctic is one notable area untouched by existing or prospective international agreements (Bloomfield, 1981).

The implementation of a national Arctic research policy will require an Arctic research plan for the next 10 to 20 years. It should be the purpose of such a plan to accomplish the following tasks:

1. Identify and assign priorities to Arctic research needs and opportunities in the physical, biological, and social sciences that deserve special national attention.

2. Provide a long-term commitment to Arctic research by assigning organizational responsibility for the coordination, management, and funding of a program designed to meet identified high-priority research needs.

3. Identify the relative roles in Arctic research of the federal, state, local, private, and university sectors, and provide a basis for their involvement in the design and conduct of an Arctic research plan.

4. Provide for mechanisms and institutional arrangements to obtain an adequate data base concurrently with research on fundamental Arctic processes; this would go far toward improving the prediction of long-term environmental changes associated with Arctic resource development.

5. Promote a concerted effort to obtain quantitative understanding of short-term natural and anthropogenic hazards and risks in the Arctic, and improve prediction and prevention capabilities.

6. Provide a clearinghouse mechanism for the timely dissemination of major results and conclusions of public research, nonproprietary private research, and unclassified military research; as well as in-

formation on related manpower, facilities, and equipment.

7. Provide continuity and stability in Arctic research so that young scientists will enter and remain in professional careers in Arctic investigations, thereby providing a cadre of trained and experienced specialists.

8. Stimulate a nationally integrated means for evaluating laboratory and logistic requirements for the conduct of Arctic research.

9. Stimulate international cooperation in the solution of problems of common interest to northern circumpolar nations.

Although the principal requirement in the implementation of Arctic research policy will be a carefully planned coordination of research and information exchange among participating organizations, there is a need for additional funding in three aspects: (1) to subsidize the high costs of logistic support that interest research organizations, both public and private, can participate in an Arctic research plan without having to augment the budgets of their research proposals with ludicrously high logistic costs and thus jeopardize their competitiveness in the national research market; (2) to support the establishment and maintenance of temporary or permanent field stations in the Arctic; (3) to support ice-strengthened vessels and icebreakers; to support data and information centers, etc.; (3) to support selected research projects not explicitly included in the missions of existing federal or state funding agencies.

Current Developments

The Polar Research Board (1982) of the National Academy of Sciences established a Committee on Arctic Research Policy, which has produced a report entitled *A United States Commitment to Arctic Research*. In this report it is recommended that the United States government include a commitment to the support of scientific research in its Arctic territory and in other areas of Arctic interest as a necessary and integral part of its national policies for economic, technical, and social development, resource development, environmental protection, national security, and international cooperation in the Arctic. It is further recommended that to assure productive polar research the United States government improve the coordination and effectiveness of federal Arctic research programs and provide stability and continuity to the effort.

In parallel with the preparation of the above Academy report, Senator Frank Murkowski (R., Alaska) introduced a bill, cosponsored by Senators Ted Stevens (R., Alaska), Shide Gorton (R., Wash.), and Henry Jackson (D., Wash.), entitled the Arctic Research and Policy Act of 1982. This bill has been passed unanimously by the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs and was approved by the Senate on December 19. The bill provides for the establishment of an Arctic Science Policy Council, whose purpose would be to facilitate cooperation between the federal government and state governments with respect to Arctic research, to develop and supervise an Arctic science policy, and to coordinate and promote international research programs. The bill further establishes an Arctic Research Commission, whose duties would be to survey Arctic research and make recommendations to the Council on priorities for future research, to establish a data collection and retrieval center, and to make grants for Arctic research, with special consideration of neglected areas. Finally, an Arctic Research Fund of \$25 million is established in the form of a trust fund that would consist of federally appropriated monies and amounts contributed by the state of Alaska and private individuals or organizations.

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Cover. View west toward the Deadman Creek rhyolite dome of the Inyo chain of vents. C. Dan Miller, USGS, has obtained the youngest date in the region, 200 radiocarbon years, from charcoal in a pyroclastic flow associated with this vent. Hill (1976) found an anomalous seismic reflector, possibly the top of a magma body, at 7 km beneath this area. The west wall of Long Valley caldera is the steep dark slope behind the dome (see "Continental ... p. 12, for more information). (Photo supplied by Rundle and Elcheberg.)

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Current research at the University of Wyoming includes: crustal evolution in the Archean and Proterozoic; the systematics of magma contamination; carbonate diagenesis; fluid-rock interaction; and the tectonic evolution of compressional and extensional orogenic belts. We hope the successful candidate will complement these studies as well as develop a strong, independent program. Applicants should submit a vita, transcripts, a letter describing future research interests, and names of three references to Dr. Robert S. Houston, Head, Dept. of Geology/Geophysics, P.O. Box 3008, University Station, University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY 82071. Closing date for applications is February 28, 1983.

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The Ohio State University/Graduate Fellowships. The Department of Geology and Mineralogy invites applications from outstanding students with strong research interests who wish to study for the Ph.D. and M.S. degrees. Applicants will compete for full-time Research Fellowships, including a Shell Doctoral Fellowship, and AMOCO, Atlantic Richfield, J. A. Brown, W. J. McCauley, J. E. Cornum, W. W. L. Casor and University Graduate Fellowships. The awards provide stipends for 9 to 12 months and cover in-state or out-of-state tuition and fees. Additional financial support is available to cover field and laboratory expenses and conference travel.

Potential study and research areas include (but are not necessarily confined to) regional geology, stratigraphy, sedimentology, micro- and macro-paleontology, isotope geochemistry, igneous and metamorphic petrology, geophysics, economic geology, Quaternary geology, and glaciology. Successful applicants will have opportunities for laboratory research and field work in the United States and abroad, including the polar regions.

For details of the graduate studies program, admission materials and further information on the Department of Geology and Mineralogy contact Dr. Kenneth Foland, Chairman, Graduate Studies Program, Department of Geology and Mineralogy, The Ohio State University, Heidenhall 107, Columbus, Ohio 43210 (or phone: 614-222-2721).

Completed applications must be received by February 1, 1983 for awards commencing in September 1983. Outstanding applicants may be invited to visit The Ohio State University in early 1983.

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Send letter of application, resume and names of two references by April 15, 1983 to: Prof. C. A. Barth, Laboratory for Atmospheric and Space Physics, Campus Box 392, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO 80509.

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Completion of the Ph.D. prior to appointment is strongly preferred. In addition, research ability shown by other publications and/or postdoctoral or industrial experience will be an advantage. The position is currently available and is expected to begin no later than September 1983. For application information, please write to: Bert E. Nordlie, Chairman, Department of Earth Sciences, 253 Science I, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.

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Inquiries should be made to: R. A. Phinney, chairman, at the above address, or by phone (609) 422-4100. While later applications will be considered, we would like to have them by the 31st of January, 1983, or earlier, if possible. Applicants should submit resume, names of at least three references, and a statement of research plans and priorities.

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Dr. Richard Dugdale, Director, Allen Hancock Foundation, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA 90089-0372.

Dr. Robert Douglas, Chairman, Department of Geological Sciences, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA 90089-0741.

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Economic Geologist/Washington State University. Washington State University seeks applicants with interests in the general area of geology and field relations of mineral deposits for an anticipated tenure-track position at the assistant professor level beginning September 1983.

Washington State University is located in the Pacific Northwest in a region of abundant mineral deposits. The geology department is young, growing, and has excellent facilities for geologic research, including a new, fully-automated electron microprobe/EM.

The successful applicant should have the Ph.D., have a sincere commitment to research, be a competent field geologist, and be able to teach introductory courses as well as courses in higher specialty. Industry experience and an interest in sedimentary ore deposits are desirable.

To apply, send a statement of teaching and research interests, resume, and the names of four references by February 1, 1983 to: Dr. Lawrence D. Meiner, Geology Department, Washington State University, Pullman, WA 99164-2812.

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